

Major General Terry L. Tucker
Commanding General
U.S. Army Armor Center



Armor and Cavalry NCOs Leading the Army

As we enter another year, it is important to realize that change is as much about looking forward as it is about reflecting and reminiscing. These are extraordinary times for our Soldiers, who stand in harm's way, protecting our rights and the rights of others. As a Nation and an Army, we have much to be proud of. Over the past 2 years, we have proven that this Nation and its forces are up to any task.

Throughout our Nation's history, scouts and tankers have put it all on the line, and courageously stood shoulder to shoulder to defend any and all threats. Warriors, such as Old Bill and The Tanker, conjure up images of Cavalry and Armor Non-commissioned Officers — images that are forever burned in our minds through pictures and sculptures displayed in hallways, offices, orderly rooms, and headquarters for decades. They epitomize what is expected from tankers and troopers.

The history of Fort Knox is full of stories of great Armor and Cavalry NCOs — men who have left an indelible mark on the Mounted Force and the Army. They have led and trained cavalrymen and tankers since the early days.

Since 1958, when Congress authorized the rank of sergeant major, and in 1967, when the Chief of Staff of the Army created the Command Sergeants Major program, 19 soldiers have held the title of Sergeant Major or Command Sergeant Major (CSM) of the Armor Center and Fort Knox. Each one of these leaders made immeasurable contributions to training, readiness, force development, and building the best NCO Corps in any Army, anywhere.

Command Sergeants Major, such as Orr, Belcher, Gillis, Fryer, and Davis worked hard to build the NCO education system, define the Career Management Field 19

career path, provide relevant guidance for selection boards, and create opportunities for tankers and troopers such as the Excellence In Armor program. Command Sergeant Major John Stephens, the longest serving CSM, held the post from August 1983 until September 1990 and served with Major Generals Brown, Tait, and Foley. My wingman is CSM George DeSario, Jr., and I am proud to serve with him. As the Chief of Armor and Regimental CSM, we count on each other, as we march in the footsteps of former leadership teams like Lynch and Price, Funk and Ross, and Bell and Christian.

Fort Knox has a distinguished honor roll of other tankers and cavalrymen who served here during their careers, including as unit Command Sergeants Major. Sergeant Major of the Army Jack Tilley served as the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course Division Chief for the NCO Academy (NCOA), and later as CSM for the 194th Separate Armored Brigade. Sergeant Major of the Army designee Kenneth Preston is currently the V Corps CSM and once served as an instructor in the Abrams Master Gunner course at Fort Knox. CSM John Beck, another great leader, served at Fort Knox as the NCOA commandant, and recently retired from his position as TRADOC CSM. CSM Jim Dale served as NCOA commandant, most recently as CSM for the U.S. Army Cadet Command, and will soon assume du-

ties as commandant of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy.

Other "Top Soldiers" who served at the Armor Center and Fort Knox have also moved on to greater responsibilities in other commands. CSM David Lady most recently served as the CSM for USAREUR and 7th Army and is now the CSM for the Space and Missile Defense Command. CSM Carl Christian is the CSM for U.S. Army FORSCOM, and CSM Joe Gainey left Fort Knox for duty as the CSM for III Corps and Fort Hood. Clearly, the position of command sergeant major in armor and cavalry demands the best, which is evident by the selection of these soldiers for other demanding positions around the world.

The cover of *ARMOR* shows dismounted combat tankers. Here at Fort Knox, we acknowledge the requirements of the force and are adjusting training to prepare Soldiers for new combat scenarios, while continuing to balance training for more traditional 19K and 19D skills. As always, our NCOs, led by the Armor Force Senior Trainer, CSM DeSario, are at the heart of this training.

FORGE THE THUNDERBOLT!

The 2004 Armor Conference was originally scheduled for the week of 24 May 2004. Due to a scheduling conflict, the Conference will be held during the week of 17 May 2004. I guarantee it will be yet another spectacular event! I will address the Conference's agendas and highlights in the March-April 2004 issue of *ARMOR*.